



2017
Book of
Remembrance

“The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.”
Psalm 112:6



“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of the saints.”
Psalm 116:15

**South Georgia Conference
The United Methodist Church**

*Memoirs of Clergy
who served in the
South Georgia Conference
of The
United Methodist Church
and died between
April 1, 2016, and March 31, 2017*

*You are our refuge and strength
a very present help
in trouble*

You are our hiding place.

*You shall preserve us
from trouble*

*Grant us Your peace
in our sorrows*

Dear Lord

*When we cannot see the
road ahead*

*Help us remember what you
have said*

*That you are with us
all the way*

*By our side you will
always stay*

Those We Remember

(Order in which they died)

Clergy

Edwin Bryan O'Neil Aug. 21, 1931 - April 10, 2016

(Janelle O'Neil)

Sammy Clark Sept. 28, 1932 - May 4, 2016

(Betty Claire Manning Clark)

Bernard K. Henry, Sr. Aug. 16, 1927 - May 6, 2016

(Lois Turner Henry)

Walter Max Hill Jan. 9, 1929 - Aug. 10, 2016

(Ann Clayton Hill)

James Gaston Pollock July 9, 1931 - Aug. 10, 2016

(Annette S. Pollock)

Annie Louise Johnson July 11, 1922 - Sept. 15, 2016

(Beauford Morris Johnson)

David Keith Willett Jan. 20, 1959 - Sept. 25, 2016

Ronald Joseph Burbank Nov. 30, 1942 - Nov. 12, 2016

(Nelly Burbank)

Those We Remember

(Order in which they died)

Clergy

Robert Lee Vickery, Jr..... July 2, 1930 - Dec. 11, 2016

(Charlotte Smith Vickery)

James Randell Daniell.....Sept. 12, 1945 - Dec. 15, 2016

(Carolyn Stegall Daniell)

Herman A. Howell July 4, 1923 - Dec. 28, 2016

(Josephine Marie McLemore Howell)

Joe ReynoldsMay 22, 1936 - March 16, 2017

(Elizabeth Reynolds)

Ramus Guy Freeman..... April 14, 1927 - March 26, 2017

(Betty Sellers Freeman)

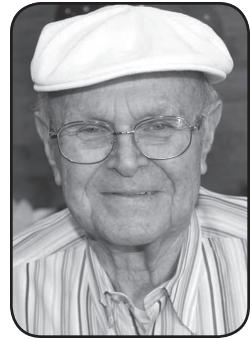
** Italics denotes spouse is deceased*

Edwin Bryan O'Neil

August 21, 1931 – April 10, 2016

“I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day;
I’d rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way....
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.”

Edgar Albert Guest, *Sermons We See*



Edwin Bryan O'Neil was truly one of those “preachers best of all.” For he lived a life of action, indeed—action in courage, endurance, faithfulness, and love. Born in Lake, MS, the O'Neils lived near Laurel in the small town of Sharon at the beginning of Edwin's childhood. After relocating a few times due to his father's job, Edwin graduated in 1950 from Pachuta High School. In 1953, he was drafted into the Army and sent into the last of the Korean War. Arriving in Korea just two weeks before the signing of the armistice, Edwin's combat training was redirected into communications, and he helped to set up command structure for the DMZ.

After his Honorable Discharge, Edwin returned home to practice his considerable woodworking skills in a Pascagoula cabinet shop. During this time, he went to see the 1955 movie *A Man Called Peter*—a biography of the late Scottish-American preacher Peter Marshall. During the movie, God called Edwin to the ministry; he became a Local Preacher in the Mississippi Conference.

About this time, Edwin met and married Janelle Ann Ryder. The couple was first appointed to the Batson Charge, then to Edwards Street in Hattiesburg, the Waynesboro Circuit, and then the Seminary Charge just north of Hattiesburg. All the while Edwin was earning his degree in Elementary Education at William Carey College.

While at the Seminary Charge, the young family's courage and faith would be severely tested. Janelle witnessed an abduction committed by notorious Klan leader Cecil Victor Sessum. Her decision to testify led to threats against the O'Neils—and a suspicious collision with a runaway car involving Janelle and their three-year old son, James. Coming to his family's rescue, Edwin tore the door off of their car with his bare hands to free his wife and son. Janelle was unbowed and testified against the Klansman. Yet God brought a blessing into this time of trial—son Eric Patrick, born in 1968.

After four years of service in their next charge of East Columbia, and more Klan threats due to Janelle's support of desegregation, the family decided in 1973 to move to Thomaston, GA—closer to Candler School of Theology's Course of Study Program. Edwin and Janelle both served as teachers in Upson County, and Edwin transferred into the North Georgia Conference in 1974. At that Annual Conference he received an appointment to serve the then-Culloden/Rogers Charge. In 1976, he began his studies at Candler.

In 1979, Edwin gave up teaching to minister full time in the South Georgia Conference—serving the Faceville Charge near Bainbridge. Edwin was able to secure the connections and funding for a new parsonage during his time in Faceville. There, the family had one final experience with the Klan when Edwin was politely asked to say the invocation for a Klan rally in the field across the street from the parsonage. He declined.

In 1985, his Course of Study completed, Edwin was ordained Elder and appointed to Omega. He would also serve the Twiggs County Charge, Cairo Circuit, Pavo, and the Trinity/Reynolds Chapel Charge near Donalsonville.

Edwin retired in 1996, and he and Janelle returned home to Quitman, Mississippi. There he spent much time with his family, walked three miles a day, and operated a home woodshop. He returned to preaching at the Poplar Springs church near Waynesboro. Eventually, a declining voice and lymphoma took him from the pulpit. With God's help, Edwin defeated the cancer—but his voice could not be repaired.

Age and time took their inevitable toll, and Edwin stood before his Lord on April 10, 2016. He left on his final journey surrounded by his family. His Homegoing service was held on April 13 at Quitman First UMC. Revs. Hiram Coker and Mike Hollingsworth officiated. His mortal remains were interred in Quitman's Odd Fellow's Cemetery.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Samuel Matthias Clark, Jr.

September 28, 1932 - May 4, 2016



Samuel Matthias Clark, Jr., died on May 4, 2016. He was born in Gainesville, GA, on September 28, 1932, and was the son of the late Samuel Matthias Clark, Sr., and Mildred Palmour Clark. He is survived by his wife, Betty Claire Manning Clark, of Rabun Gap, GA, and a son, David Michael Clark, of Portland, OR.

Always known as “Sammy,” he grew up in Macon and graduated from Lanier High School. He received his B. A. degree from Emory University in 1954, leaving a stellar academic and leadership record in which he was named to Phi Beta Kappa and the Senior Honor Society. He received a Master’s degree in English at Princeton University and a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary. Turning down many academic offers, Sammy returned to the South Georgia Conference in 1958 and was appointed to Brookfield, a three-church circuit in Tift County, where he earned the respect and love of the churches and community. In 1961 he married Betty Claire Manning. In 1962 they moved to Savannah where Sammy was appointed as the pastor of the newly formed Inner City Methodist Church. Their son, David, was born during this time. The congregation was meant to be a racially inclusive church in a very racially divided community, a difficult task. However, because of his effective 12-year ministry, Sammy received the highest honor a Savannah citizen can receive, the Oglethorpe Award.

Feeling a call to a wider mission field, the Clark family was sent as missionaries to Peru in 1974. Living conditions were harsh, the political climate was threatening, and earthquakes were unsettling. However, Sammy had some moving and meaningful experiences that later became moving and meaningful illustrations in his remarkable sermon barrel.

After three tough years the family returned home. Without Sammy’s knowledge, Bishop Cannon transferred him to the North Georgia Conference and appointed him to Trinity UMC in downtown Atlanta. It was an urban traditional church with a stable congregation.

Under Sammy's servant leadership, the congregation developed a ministry to street people, alcoholics, and drug addicts while conducting Sunday Services with unique, compelling, and relevant preaching. As always, creative new ministries emerged, and people who had previously had no champion found in Sammy a source of faith, hope and love.

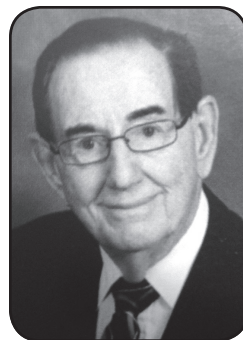
Sammy's final appointment was as pastor of Allen Memorial UMC at Oxford, GA, and as Campus Chaplain at Oxford College of Emory University. After three years, Sammy's campus ministry grew to the point that he became the full-time chaplain and a member of the faculty at Oxford. It turned out that this was the ministry for which all of his previous experiences had prepared him. Countless numbers of Oxford alums who saw Jesus in Sammy are today living changed lives because of the influence of his ministry during his 16 fruitful years as Chaplain.

The funeral service was held at Allen Memorial UMC in Oxford, GA, on May 9, 2016. There Sammy was remembered as the epitome of a Servant Leader through the testimony of peers and former students. Burial was in the Oxford Historical Cemetery in Oxford.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Donald M. Kea at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Bernard Keith Henry, Sr.

August 16, 1927 - May 6, 2016



Bernard Keith Henry, Sr. was born on August 16, 1927, to Hugh Fred and Mabel Prince Henry in Augusta, GA. The family was active in St. Luke United Methodist Church where Bernard attended MYF and served as president. He felt the call to ministry at the age of 24 while recuperating from tuberculosis. He received an undergraduate degree from Mercer University, a Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology and was ordained as an Elder in 1959.

He faithfully served Christ in the following appointments in North Georgia: South Lincoln, Milledgeville Circuit, Flippen, Cedar Grove, Danielsville, Dunson in LaGrange, and Gray. In South Georgia he served: Liberty in Macon, Reynolds/Crowell, Centerville, Soperton, Wadley, Wrightsville First, Harmony, Centenary/Dexter, and Alamo, retiring in 1989. He served Dexter 24 years in retirement.

Bernard and his wife, Lois, worked as a team and were greatly loved. Bernard had a keen mind and a caring heart and loved to preach and sing. Lois was a dedicated school teacher, active in each church and the United Methodist Women. They have been dedicated also as parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Their lingering heartbreak was the early death of their daughter, Tina Henry Deloach. Their current family consists of Keith and Sarah Henry and Kaylee and Spencer Henry of Alpharetta, GA; and Melissa and Christopher Black, Alexis, Ethan, and Natalie Black of Newnan, GA. After retirement in 2015, Bernard related to the Pine Forest UMC Charge Conference, and Lois became a member. They were both regular in worship and rotated as teachers of the Ben F. Williams Sunday School Class. In 2016 he became seriously ill.

Lois Henry and family were with Brother Bernard when he died at Emory University Hospital, Atlanta, GA, on May 6, 2016. A memorial service was held at Dexter UMC on May 10 with Rev. Sam Collins, Dr. Rick Lanford, Dr. Joel Dent, and Rev. Wes Moye,

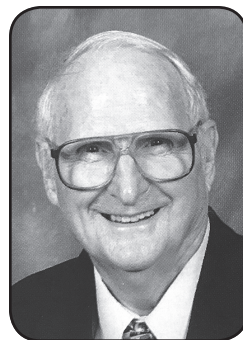
their pastor, presiding. In his eulogy, Rev. Moye quoted Keith, Bernard's son, as saying: "Dad loved to preach, enjoyed poetry and history, adored his wife and his family. He sang loudly and joyfully, cared for his members lovingly, prayed constantly, enjoyed playing golf badly with me. His clothes were sharp, and his Bible was ragged. He is remembered fondly by those whose lives he touched!"

Lois added: "Our family has had such enjoyable times in various parsonages and many vacations and trips. Bernard enjoyed singing. We would sing as we traveled. We both enjoyed singing with the Golden Notes at Pine Forest. Bernard liked to share hugs, he always had a smile on his face, and some say he had an infectious laugh. He loved God, and he loved people." Wes Moye ended with these words: "Today we celebrate Bernard Henry's homecoming....he has fought the good fight...he has finished the race...he has kept the faith...he has received the Crown of Lifehe is at home with the Lord, forever! Amen!" Townsend Funeral Home was in charge. Interment followed at the Dublin Memorial Gardens.

Submitted by Dr. Joel H. Dent at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Walter Max Hill

January 9, 1929 - August 10, 2016



Dr. Max Hill was born in 1929. The formative years of his life occurred in Albany, GA. He was a graduate of Albany High School in 1946. Eight years later Max began his ministry in his beloved hometown at Morningside UMC.

Determined to prepare himself for a most effective ministry, Max began his theological education after earning his Bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern University. He earned his Master of Theology degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University and later enhanced his education with a Doctor of Ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary.

After serving Christ at Morningside, Max and his beloved wife Ann continued their ministry at Meigs-Ochlocknee in Thomas County, Wrens, Ocilla, Lynmore in Macon, Pinson Memorial in Sylvester, Lyons, Dawson St. in Thomasville, Eastman, Sharpe's Chapel in Lyons, and Marvin. Max retired from the itinerancy in 2004 though his ministry continued as he embraced opportunities that allowed him to serve Christ.

Max was known to many as a caring, sensitive giant. He was a gifted, avid artist, painting many oils. In his ministry he also published a book entitled "The Twig is Bent." Max shared his life and ministry with his beloved Ann for 58 years. Max and Ann served with such devotion that Lyons UMC named a room in their honor, the Max and Ann Hill Library and Hospitality Room. The room for theological study and the warm welcoming of others captured two of the important attributes of their life and ministry.

Sharing their life of ministry were their four children, Kevin, Clay, Vic, and Angela. The family grew through the years as they were blessed with nine grandchildren and seven

great-grandchildren. Ann preceded Max in death. Max passed into glory on August 10, 2016. The service was held in Lyons UMC with Rev. Jim Morrow officiating. Burial followed in the Lyons City Cemetery.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

James Gaston Pollock

July 9, 1931 - August 10, 2016



Gaston was born July 9, 1931, in Mitchell County, GA. As a devoted young man, he attended and graduated from Young Harris College and Birmingham Southern College. In further preparation for his ministry, he earned his Master of Theology degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Though he entered the retired status after his pastoral ministry, he continued serving on staff at St. Luke UMC, Columbus, as the Director of the Samaritan Fund Outreach. He served in this capacity for 18 years.

Sharing his pastoral ministry was his dear wife of 62 years, Annette Sanders. He and Annette married in 1962. They first met as active church members at Hamp Stevens UMC, Columbus. Their love began in the church and continued through a beautiful, caring ministry of over 44 years.

Gaston and Annette were blessed with two daughters, Angie and Jane. They also have four grandchildren and a great-grandson and great-granddaughter.

The Pollock parsonage family served several churches, including the Marion Circuit, Brinson Circuit, Attapulcus, Jamestown in Waycross, Associate at Albany First, Whitfield in Savannah, St. John in Columbus, Byron, Ingleside in Macon, and Striplin Terrace, also in Columbus. He retired from serving Bloomfield UMC in Macon.

Gaston and Annette immersed themselves in ministry following retirement. Active members of St. Luke UMC, they participated in many capacities and served through many ministries. Gaston also volunteered with Respite Care, Meals on Wheels, and the chaplaincy at Callaway Gardens Chapel for 18 years. Gaston and Annette loved the beauty of God's creation at Callaway Gardens. He believed in being a committed member of the community through the most active civic club in the town he served. These included the

Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, and Exchange Club. He used his own physical adversity by volunteering to help with cancer research at the University of Arizona for 15 years. This selfless act was indicative of the kind of man he was.

Gaston loved working outdoors, as was evident in his hobbies. He loved to garden and helped to create a large bird sanctuary in his large back yard. People were amazed at the number of hummingbirds he attracted to that sanctuary. One can't help but be reminded of St. Francis of Assisi's love of wildlife, especially the birds out of his love for God's creatures. He was also a great fan of America's pastime, baseball, especially of the Atlanta Braves. When Gaston passed, he was wearing a Braves cap.

Those of us acquainted with Gaston remember him as a devoted Christian, a lover of the church, and a man with a great sense of humor. Laughter is its own form of courage, and Gaston never lost his contagious humor. Many will remember that humor in his retirement speech as he used his recent struggle with skin cancer to joyfully make us chuckle. He was a beloved pastor to his people. In the words of Annette, "He never said an unkind word about anyone."

Rev. Gaston Pollock passed into glory on August 10, 2016, at age 85. Among Gaston's final words just before passing into glory was his telling statement, "My purpose on earth is over." Indeed, he would hear, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

The celebration of his life was held on August 13 at St. Luke UMC in Columbus with Rev. Robert Beckum officiating. Burial followed at Park Hill Cemetery in Columbus.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Annie Louise Johnson

July 11, 1922 – September 15, 2016



Annie Louise was born in Travelers Rest, SC, on July 11, 1922. She was the fifth child of James Elmer and Mattie Parker Clark. She grew up on a farm during the depression. Her family attended Jackson Grove Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was part of the Travelers Rest Circuit. At an early age, she could be found teaching Sunday school, cleaning up the church, and attending special worship services when held. It is said that she received the call to preach at age six when her sisters found her preaching to the farm animals from a tree stump near the barn instead of chopping cotton with them.

Since it was before women had the right to be ordained in ministry, Annie Louise set her sights on being a Director of Christian Education. In pursuit of her desire to be a “church worker,” she attended Spartanburg Methodist College, Furman University, and Scarritt College for Christian Workers. In the summer of 1945, she traveled with the Southeastern Jurisdiction Youth Caravan visiting churches in Georgia and Florida leading youth week activities for local churches. In the fall of 1945 she was invited by Rev. G.N. Rainey to join the staff at Trinity Methodist Church in Waycross, GA, as the educational worker.

It was while working at Trinity that she met B. Morris Johnson, a member of the church. They were married on August 29, 1947. Annie Louise went from being a paid staff member to being a volunteer worker in the church and remained a volunteer until 1962. In the fall of 1962 Rev. Bruce Wilson invited Annie Louise to join the staff at First Methodist Church in Waycross as the Director of Christian Education.

As her son David was preparing to attend Garrett Theological Seminary, Annie Louise made the decision to get her license to preach. After she completed the course, mother and son were presented their licenses to preach by Bishops Moore, Smith, and Cannon during the service to dedicate the new sanctuary of Waycross First in 1973.

In the fall of 1974 the death of the pastor at Gilchrist Park UMC created an opening of a charge that needed to be filled. Annie Louise was offered the opportunity to fill the pulpit until someone could be found. She refused the offer. Instead, she countered with staying until annual conference the next year. At that time, if the church did not want her to return, she would accept that decision. She served Gilchrist Park for seven years. Annie Louise was ordained a Deacon and admitted to the South Georgia Conference as an Associate Member in 1979, fulfilling a lifelong dream to be an ordained clergy person. She served on various conference committees and was a Trustee of Epworth by the Sea for a number of years. She served the West Green Circuit and Manor Circuit. She retired in 1989 and returned to First UMC in Waycross, serving as their retired associate pastor until 2006. Annie Louise was the first woman to serve a station church. She was also the first female Deacon to retire from the South GA Conference.

Annie Louise died on September 15, 2016, in Charlotte, NC. At the time of her death, she was survived by her husband of 69 years, Morris; sons, Lem (Del) of Milledgeville, GA, David (Susan), of Charlotte, NC, Mark (Amy) of Kissimmee, FL, and Alan (Trish) of Mooresville, NC; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. On September 18, Rev. Barry Giddens and Rev. Bill Ebener, a nephew, officiated the service at Waycross First. Annie Louise is interred in the Oakland Cemetery in Waycross. Music Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

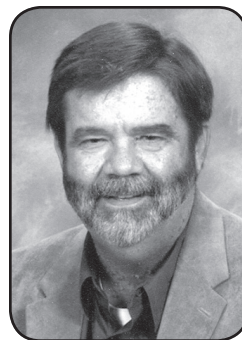
Submitted by Rev. David C. Johnson at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

David Keith Willett

January 20, 1959 – September 25, 2016

“I try to increase the power God has given me to
see the best in everything and everyone,
and make that Best a part of my life.”

Helen Keller, *Optimism*



David Keith Willett’s memorial could have been written long ago. It would have been a short story of the brief life of a little boy born with two deformed and barely-functioning kidneys. It would have been recanted over a tiny coffin next to a tiny grave under, perhaps, a tiny stone. It would have. Except that it wasn’t. For God had other plans.

On January 20, 1959, David was born in Louisville, KY, into a medical nightmare. The many surgeries—he endured six operations before he was three—and near-constant medical supervision could have crushed his young spirit. But even at less than three years old, David showed a strength and courage that would define his life. He found a way to overcome the obstacles and find other paths to his goals.

Medically barred from all contact sports, David became a student trainer and sports statistician, earning him a varsity jacket and letter. He developed his health and athleticism through weightlifting—advancing enough to eventually work as a trainer. David became a drummer in the school band and rose through the ranks of the Boy Scouts. He made and kept friends easily. All of this David accomplished despite chronic pain. Along the way the family lived in Bardstown, Danville, and Lexington—all the time keeping connected to their devout faith through the Baptist Church.

David’s parents, Art and Sylvia, gave of themselves to David in a most literal way. His father donated a kidney to David when he was just fifteen. At thirty-two, his father’s kidney failed, and his mother donated one of hers. That kidney would last David twenty-five years.

With the love and total support of his parents—and their kidneys—David graduated from college in 1977 and enrolled in Pikeville College (now the University of Pikeville), earning a degree in Business. This led to jobs in banking and management, but David

was unfulfilled. He had a passion for history and wanted to teach, so he returned to the college to gain a second degree, this time in teaching. And so, a new career began as a substitute history teacher, leading David to several area schools. It was during this time that David became a part of the United Methodist Church. Eventually, work took him to the high school in Nicholasville, KY—very close to Asbury Theological Seminary. God used the proximity of the seminary and his long-time devoted involvement in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to call and attract David to yet another occupation—this time, the job that God had made him for.

Nearing the completion of his M.Div. degree, David encountered a visiting pastor from the South Georgia Conference. David Tart, the Senior Pastor of Wilmington Island United Methodist Church, was at Asbury interviewing potential Associate Pastors. The two Davids connected, and the now Rev. Willett made the move from Kentucky to Savannah, GA.

Following seven years of service as the Associate Pastor of Wilmington Island, David was appointed to Folkston upon his ordination as Elder. Five years later, he was moved to Millen. He began a wonderful ministry there, but David's years of medical struggles had worn down his earthly body.

In 2015, David was placed on medical leave, and on September 25, 2016, his pain and trials ended forever. Even the Mayo Clinic—his caregivers since he was three years old—could do no more for him. It was time to rest in the arms of our Savior. It was time, at last, for his memorial to be written.

David Keith Willett's life was celebrated with laughter and music on September 1, 2016, in the church of his first appointment, Wilmington Island. The Revs. James Sapp and Jim Rush officiated. Celebrating together were his mother; brothers, Scott and Doug; and their families. David chose cremation for the disposition of his mortal frame, and his ashes were scattered in the grass in front of the Strickland Auditorium at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island, GA.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Ronald Joseph Burbank

November 30, 1942 – November 12, 2016



Ronald Joseph Burbank was born in Albany, NY, on November 30, 1942, to the late Wilfred C. Burbank and Ida Mae Bolus. Married to Nelly Visitacion Burbank, they lived in Waycross for several years before moving to Blackshear in Pierce County 16 years ago. Ron was retired from the US Army, and after serving his nation, he continued his life of service as a pastor for the Jamestown United Methodist Church in Jamestown, Hopewell United Methodist Church and Crosby Chapel in Baxley, Blythe Island United Methodist Church in Brunswick, and finally the Gilchrist Park United Methodist Church in Waycross.

Along the way he was, as we all are, writing his own obituary. Friends and parishioners have written about his influence on their lives.

James said, “What a wonderful gentleman was Brother Ron. His life was a walking testimony to the greatness of God. A good, good friend and brother in the Lord, he will be missed but always remembered.”

Alicia said to Nelly, “I am so sorry for your loss. I really enjoyed our talks, laughs, and the stories that Mr. Burbank told me. I grew very attached to him and you as well. I will always carry a special place in my heart for him. He will be greatly missed and loved as well. Nobody will ever take his place in my heart.”

Debbie said, “Mr. Ron was a wonderful man; his compassion for his Lord was amazing. His love and caring was there when my in-laws passed away, and his singing voice was a gift.”

And Patricia said, “Ronald was a gift to the people that knew him and sad for those that didn’t have a chance. Ron and Nelly were a killer team together that couldn’t be beat.

Ron helped my husband, and I was helped just knowing that he was helping my husband. He will be missed and thought of always with a smile on my face and just a little pain in my heart. I KNOW he is up in Heaven keeping an eye on us all.”

But it was not all work; he also enjoyed reading, fishing, riding motorcycles, his coffee, cruises, and going on trips in his RV... but his call to ministry was always his first priority. He was a happy man and will be missed by many of us who knew and loved him.

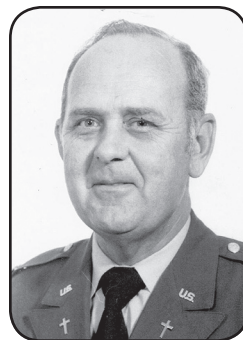
Pastor Ronald Joseph Burbank, 73, of Blackshear, passed away Saturday morning, November 12, 2016, at the Satilla Hospice House. Survivors include his wife of 54 years, Nelly Visitacion Burbank of Blackshear; two daughters and sons-in-law, Rose and Eddie Atkinson of Fleming Island, FL, and Ruth and Rob Lucky of Green Cove Springs, FL; two sisters, Cindy Brownell and Pam Bolus, both of Pownal, VT; two brothers, Joe Bolus of North Adams, VT, and Jerry Bolus of Aurora, CO; 4 grandchildren, Charles Cliatt, Amanda Brisson, Grant Lucky, and Brent Lucky; and several nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Visitation for Ronald Burbank was Thursday afternoon, November 17, 2016, from 4:00-6:00 p.m., and the funeral service was Thursday evening, November 17, 2016, at 6:30 p.m. at the Pearson-Dial Chapel in Blackshear, GA. Memorials were directed to the Satilla Hospice House and to the Gilchrist Park UMC in Waycross, GA.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Robert “Bob” Lee Vickery, Jr.

July 2, 1930 – December 11, 2016



Rev. Dr. Robert “Bob” Lee Vickery, Jr., was born in Winston-Salem, NC, on July 2, 1930, to the late Willie (Burns) Black and Robert Lee Vickery, Sr. He married the late Doris Jean (Grady) Vickery and served our country in the armed forces.

He later married Charlotte (Smith) Vickery and left behind four daughters, Paula H. Settle (David) of Inman, SC, Julia V. Pace (Hugh) of Arcadia, SC, Sara V. McElhaney (George) of Columbia, SC, Emily V. Walzer (Manford) of Bamberg, Germany; two sons, Michael B. Henderson (Cathy) of Florence, SC, and Ross L. Vickery (Tammy), of Inman, SC; along with 12 grandchildren, Dr. Suzanne Larsen, Gary Rhoden, Michael Rhoden, Jordan McElhaney, Melissa Vickery, Amber Addison, Angelica Addison, Jonathan Walzer, Jacob Walzer, Marit Walzer, Bennett Walzer, and Yorick Walzer; and 5 great-grandchildren, Gabrielle Larsen, Blaine Rhoden, Jonathan Walzer, Jr., Nora Walzer, and Elija Walzer. He was predeceased by two brothers, Thurman Vickery and Lowell Vickery, and two sisters, Willie Mae Huffman and Martha Ann Vickery.

He joined the US Air Force and later retired from the US Army as a Lieutenant Colonel, having served in the Vietnam War. He was, for 19 years, 3 months, and 27 days (yes, we veterans count the days!), a US Army Chaplain. He served as a pastor for 57 years in North Carolina, South Carolina, and South Georgia.

It’s often said we write our own obituaries, and he did. David Hoffman said, “Uncle Bob was a patriot and hero and served our country with honor. I know he is now enjoying the presence of our Lord and reuniting with friends and family, including my mom/his sister, Willie Mae.”

Bruce and Linda Thompson said, “He was passionate about sharing the love of Christ while serving as a fill-in pastor at Marcus UMC. His impact on many lives will be felt

for years. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.”

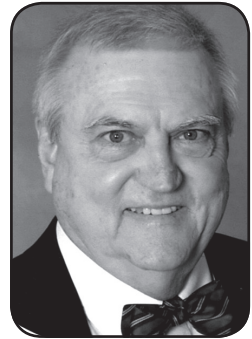
Dean Jackson said, “What an honor to have known Dr. Bob even for a brief time and have realized his humility, kindness and to have had the honor of thanking him for his service to our country and for my protection.”

Dr. Vickery died at 86 years of age while living at the Richard Campbell Nursing Home in Anderson, South Carolina. It was appropriately a Sunday, December 11, 2016. The family gathered at the Seawright Funeral Home on Tuesday for a visitation and funeral in the chapel conducted by Dr. Ron Gaddy and Rev. Matthew Bishop. He was buried with full military honors in the M. J. Dolly Cooper Veteran’s Cemetery in Anderson, SC. Donations were directed to the DAV in Cincinnati, OH, and the Spartanburg Humane Society.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

James Randell
“Randy” Daniell

September 12, 1945 – December 15, 2016



Pastor James Randell “Randy” Daniell was born September 12, 1945, in Colquitt, GA, to the late Murphy and Clyde Middleton Daniell. He attended Darton College and graduated from Georgia Southwestern University with a Bachelor’s degree and from Auburn University with a Master’s degree in Psychology. He was a veteran who faithfully served America in Vietnam.

He married Carolyn Stegall Daniell; and they were together for fifty years before he died of a heart attack at 71 years of age on Thursday, December 15, 2016, at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany. In addition to his wife, Carolyn, Pastor Daniell is survived by one son, John Thomas Daniell of Tifton; his mother-in-law, Nell Stegall of Tifton; one sister and brother-in-law, Dot and Graton Helms of Eastman; one sister-in-law, Emmie Daniels of Ashford, AL; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his sister, Vivian Tobias of Bainbridge, and his brother, David Daniels of Ashford, AL.

He was employed with Union Camp at their Thorsby Plant in Clayton, AL, and later in Tifton, GA. He also taught introductory psychology at Valdosta State University, Darton College, ABAC, Moultrie Technical School, and Georgia Southwestern University. He was also a private pilot and later enjoyed flying remote control airplanes and quail hunting.

His spiritual journey began in the Catholic Church and later in the Episcopal Church, where he developed an appreciation for the liturgical ministry and worship. Then he joined the United Methodist Church and graduated from the Course of Study at Emory University. He and his brother-in-law, Graton Helms, spent lots of time sharing their faith and talking about the Bible as the Word of God while trying to understand it, live it, and preach it to their congregations.

As a local pastor in the South Georgia Annual Conference of the UMC, he served for seventeen years at Sweetwater UMC in Pearson, Pine Level UMC in Fitzgerald, and Beulah UMC in Sylvester. After retirement, he and Carolyn attended Mt. Calvary UMC near Tifton, and as you might expect, he and Carolyn were active and beloved members. He often preached for Pastor Ronnie Howell when he was away from the church, and Carolyn was, and is, their soloist.

After the visitation on December 18, 2016, funeral services were held Monday, December 19, 2016, at Albritton Funeral Directors chapel in Tifton, GA, with Rev. Joseph Carter, Rev. Ronnie Howell, Mr. Bobby Roberts, and Rev. Graton Helms officiating. Interment was at Union Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery in Colquitt, GA, near family members.

In addition to flowers, donations were requested for Mt. Calvary United Methodist Church in Tifton, The American Heart Association at www.donatenow.heart.org, or the American Cancer Society in Tifton.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Herman Allen Howell

July 4, 1923 – December 28, 2016



Rev. Herman Allen Howell died December 28, 2016, at Golden Crest Assisted Living in Stockbridge, following a brief illness. Graveside services with military honors were held at Crown Hill Cemetery, Albany, GA, Rev. Randy Roberts officiating. Arrangements were conducted by Kimbrell-Stern Funeral Directors of Albany.

Herman Howell was born July 4, 1923, in Young Harris, GA, to David and Amanda McClure Howell of Towns County. After graduation from Towns County High, he gained employment in Canton, OH. When America entered World War II, he immediately volunteered, joining an engineering battalion in the Third Army. He served as a scout and personal driver for officers and participated in building the largest platoon bridge of the War across the Rhine River.

After discharge he received a Bachelor of Arts from Union University in Jackson, TN, and a Bachelor of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. Ordained while in seminary, he pastored Baptist churches in Orangeburg, SC, and Acree, Omega, and Palmetto, GA.

In Acree he met Marie McLemore of Albany. They married August 15, 1948. She was Herman's helpmeet in life and church for 59 years! Three children blessed their union, Joy, Al and Sherry.

In Palmetto, Herman became friends with a Methodist pastor who helped him understand Methodist beliefs and the Methodist way. He "fell in love" with Methodism! He took a supply pastorate at Northview, Warner Robins, in 1966. He entered the South Georgia Conference in June 1969 as an Elder on Recognition of Orders. He served Northview; Shellman; Hebardville, Waycross; Meldrim-Ellabell; Morningside, Americus; Sale City;

and Trinity, Albany. After retirement in 1991, he and Josephine continued to live in Albany, making Porterfield their church home.

Herman's ministry was that of a shepherd. He was all about people. He cared greatly about people's lives and invested himself in them, always asking, "How can I help?" Whenever a need arose he was quickly there to see what he and the Church could do. He cared equally about souls! No conversation ended without proclaiming the Gospel, especially if he was not sure of that person's salvation!

In his personal life, Herman played golf and loved to sing, making a "joyful noise!" He enjoyed relating to people; he seldom went anywhere without engaging someone in conversation! But his number one hobby was reading. He was an avid reader and found great pleasure in it!

After Marie's death in September 2008, Herman moved to Stockbridge to be near his son Al, becoming a resident of Golden Crest Assisted Living. There he led two gentlemen in their 80s to give their lives to the Lord. By his bedside he kept the "50 Years in the Ministry" certificate given at the 2016 South Georgia Annual Conference. He died trusting in the Lord he had faithfully served!

Herman was predeceased by a daughter, Joyce Waters. He is survived by his son, David Albert Howell (Melissa) of McDonough; daughter, Sherry Howell Varney (Mike) of Denver, CO; granddaughter, Anna Joy Howell of McDonough; sister, Vergie May Chandler of Douglasville; and many nieces and nephews.

Submitted by Rev. James Duke, Jr., member of the Memoirs Committee

Joe Lee Reynolds

May 22, 1936 – March 16, 2017



Joe Lee Reynolds was born May 22, 1936, in Norman Park, GA, the son of Joseph Stephen Reynolds and Berta Lou Evarson.

Rev. Reynolds attended Albany High School before serving his country in the United States Navy Seabees. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and was wounded in service. He later had a construction company and retired as a police officer with the Albany Police Department after 25 years of service. He was a local pastor in the United Methodist Church, serving as pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Albany for 10 years.

Mr. Reynolds was a member of the local Fraternal Order of Police and the American Legion. He raised, bred, and showed guppies, having his own breed of guppies. He built model military dioramas and enjoyed playing and singing in a gospel group with his wife and his daughter.

Rev. Reynolds died March 16, 2017, in Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital. Funeral services were held Monday, March 20, 2017, in the chapel of Hall and Hall Funeral Home in Albany. Rev. Robin Chaplin officiated. Interment was in Riverside Cemetery in Albany, with full military honors.

In addition to his parents, Rev. Reynolds was preceded in death by his first wife, Reva Leonora Reynolds; two sons, Robert and Anthony Reynolds; daughter, Janet Reynolds; step-daughter, Tammy Renee Evers; and step-son, Christopher Keith Cyr.

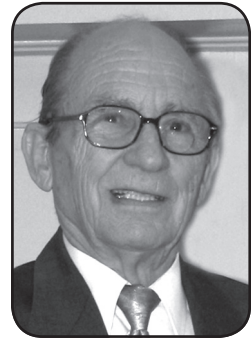
Survivors include his wife, Elizabeth Ormsby Reynolds; sons, Joe Lee Reynolds, Jr., and Crystal of Albany, GA, Brian Wade Reynolds and Angie of Leesburg, GA, Guy William

Cyr and Sandy of Oakfield, GA; daughter Jody Price and Daniel of Worth County; 18 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

Submitted by Jan Tripp, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Ramus Guy Freeman

April 14, 1927 - March 26, 2017



The Rev. Ramus Guy Freeman, age 89, of Tennille, went to his Heavenly home Sunday, March 26, 2017, at his residence following an extended illness.

Reverend Freeman was born April 14, 1927, in Harrison, Washington County, the son of the late Lester Freeman and the late Ollie Ross Freeman. He was predeceased by his son, Robbie Lamont Freeman, two brothers, Lester Monroe Freeman and Maynard Freeman, and grandson, Sean Freeman.

After graduation from Tennille High School (May 1943), Mr. Freeman attended Mercer (1943-44), Georgia Teachers College (1944-46, BS/English), Georgia Southern College (1969-70, MS/English) and Graduate School at Auburn University (1970-71, 45 hours work toward EdD/English). He was licensed to preach on May 23, 1944, and ordained Elder in 1948. He officially retired in June 1986 but continued to serve the Annual Conference as Retired Supply until June 2007. He was sent by the presiding bishop to twenty-one appointments including fifty-five churches. He pastored: Winona Park Circuit, Dudley Circuit, Davisboro Charge, Hagan Charge, Edison Charge, Doerun Church, Blackshear Church, Shellman Charge, Lee Street Church, Newington Circuit, Andersonville Charge, Ellaville Church, Reynolds-Crowell Charge, Gray-Clinton Charge, and Northview Church, and following retirement, he continued his service at Alamo Church, Tabernacle Church, Adrian Charge, Mitchell, Gibson, and Wrightsville Circuit and returned to Tabernacle to complete his ministry to God, the South Georgia Conference, and the people of each congregation he was sent to serve. Fifty-five churches!

Ramus was editor of the "George-Anne" during his senior year at Georgia Southern College and maintained that passion for Journalism and English when he later taught at Randolph County High School and Georgia Southwestern College in Americus. In addition, he was editor of the Emory University "Town and Country School Report." He

was involved in Town and Country Church programs of the Conference and Southeastern Jurisdiction for many years. Additionally, he served as Chair, Committee on Recognitions; Chair, Commission on Town and Country Work; and Secretary, Commission on Minimum Salary. He was editor of "Meet the Circuits," author of two units of study for youth for the United Methodist General Board of Education, and wrote a series for the Wesleyan Christian Advocate entitled "Meet the Minister."

In retirement, Ramus bought and remodeled the Freeman family house in Tennille he grew up in and made it a lovely and comfortable home. A natural carpenter, he crafted furniture; he also enjoyed gardening, playing the piano and spending time researching the family tree. He had a wonderful life.

Survivors are his wife of 70+ years, Betty Sellers Freeman of Tennille; two daughters, Karen Watson (Glenn) and Kristi Fuss (Scott); son, Stephen (Sallie); eleven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; daughter-in-law, Pennie Freeman; sister, Catherine Freeman Orr (Charles); two brothers, the Rev. Dr. G. Ross Freeman and Oran Freeman (Sara); and sister-in-law, Martha Freeman.

A large gathering of family and friends came together in the sanctuary of the Tennille United Methodist Church on March 30, 2017, to worship God and celebrate the life of Ramus Guy Freeman, devoted husband, brother, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, friend, and faithful servant.

The Rev. Randall Smith, pastor of the Tennille church, The Rev. Dr. George R. Freeman, Jr, nephew, and The Rev. Dr. Rick Lanford, Superintendent, officiated at the Service of Death and Resurrection.

The family chose 2 Timothy 4:6-8 as the text for his funeral, "I'm already being poured out like a sacrifice to God, and the time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith."

His son-in-law Scott Fuss sang his favorite hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." All in attendance were moved by the words that inspired Ramus during his life and us in his death, "All I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!"

Ramus was laid to rest at the Zeta Cemetery in Tennille. Thanks be to God for this faithful servant.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. George Ross Freeman, Jr., at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

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*Memoirs of Spouses
who served beside Clergy
in the
South Georgia Conference
of The
United Methodist Church
and died between
April 1, 2016, and March 31, 2017*

*Faith is the victory
that overcomes the world
Faith is to believe
what we do not see
Faith's reward is to see
and enjoy
what we believe*

*May we ever trust in You
and never lean on our own*

Understanding

*The reward for believing is
great*

*Your kingdom is everlasting
and Your dominion endures
throughout all generations*

Those We Remember

(Order in which they died)

Spouses

Margaret Ione Reid July 31, 1921 - March 23, 2016
(Carlton F. Reid, Sr.)

Mary Grace Scoates McCurley March 26, 1921 - April 13, 2016
(Harry W. Scoates, Jr.)

Glenda Faye Webb July 6, 1946 - May 12, 2016
(Ronald Kenneth Webb)

Betty H. Oliver Aug. 13, 1930 - June 22, 2016
(Thomas Tinsley Oliver)

Carol Wood Mathis Aug. 26, 1935 - July 19, 2016
(Vance B. Mathis)

Betty L. Houston April 14, 1926 - Sept. 12, 2016
(Lawrence E. Houston, Jr.)

Patricia Drake Aultman March 24, 1931 - Oct. 12, 2016
(Richard G. Aultman)

Jeanette Bittner Dec. 31, 1922 - Oct. 17, 2016
(Raymond Leroy Bittner)

Jessie Mathis Aug. 28, 1946 - Oct. 20, 2016
(Hubert Guy Mathis, Jr.)

Emma Dell Hendley Brooks July 27, 1936 - Nov. 6, 2016
(James Allen Brooks)

Florine Lois Chappell Aug. 6, 1931 - Dec. 3, 2016
(Robert P. Chappell, Sr.)

Mabel Estelle Martin Harris-Webb Aug. 28, 1918 - Dec. 10, 2016
(James Redding Webb, Jr.)

Those We Remember

(Order in which they died)

Spouses

Janie Ophelia RayMay 6, 1943 - Dec. 22, 2016
(Rodger Randall Ray, Sr.)

Golda Faye Penny Hudson.....Dec. 21, 1934 - Jan. 5, 2017
(David Elzie Hudson)

Rosalie V. Johnson July 5, 1934 - Jan. 12, 2017
(Joseph Morgan Johnson)

Myrna Eidson RobertsJan, 11, 1937 - Jan, 15, 2017
(Larry B. Roberts)

Marguerite Emmalyn D. AdamsMay 6, 1926 - Jan. 20, 2017
(*Arthur Ray Adams*)

Virginia Ripley Fathauer Smith Sept. 6, 1937 - Feb. 13, 2017
(*Clarence E. Smith, Jr.*)

Beauford Morris Johnson..... March 7, 1924 - Feb. 21, 2017
(*Annie Louise Johnson*)

Mary Catharyn OsbornOct. 16, 1942 - Feb. 26, 2017
(James Robert Osborn)

Jane Inman Shirah..... Aug. 22, 1926 - March 21, 2017
(*Dr. Jason Shirah*)

Laren Gail Reinheld April 22, 1946 - March 23, 2017
(William Reinheld, Jr.)

Frances S. RamseyJune 16, 1927 - March 30, 2017
(*Dr. Gilbert Ramsey*)

* *Italics denotes spouse is deceased*

*Margaret Ione
Pendleton Reid*

July 31, 1921 – March 23, 2016



Born in Lloyd, FL, to Howard and Lelia Catolia Kidd Cooksey, Margaret was one of a large family. Her eight siblings were brothers Howard, Butler, and Cleve and sisters Lelia, twins Kathleen & Eileen, Betty, and Lillian. Kind Margaret would help her mother raise Lillian—and in the end Margaret outlived her entire family.

A big heart and a beautiful voice came quickly to young Margaret. Her singing ability even attracted RCA to offer her a chance for a record, but her father forbade her to go. But she would never stop singing.

As a delightful young lady she caught the eye of Murray Arthur Pendleton, an Army Staff Sergeant. Soon she had a family of her own—two sons, Howard and William, and a daughter, Betty Jean. Margaret and Murray would teach their children many wonderful and useful lessons, including “If you start something, finish it. Ask for help if you need to, but finish it.” Margaret would lead her children in singing and dancing whenever Murray was headed home from a deployment. Eventually, Murray lost a leg in combat and left the Armed Forces, and the family resided in former Army barracks in Columbus, GA. They attended Midway Methodist Church, with Carlton Reid as their pastor.

No longer a soldier, Murray began a career in motorsports as an announcer. He also helped Howard become one of the youngest dirt track drivers in the country—sometimes taking up the family dining table to build and repair motors, and also worrying Mom by watching little Howard zip around the racetrack. Murray’s voice was soon well-known in the racing community, and he became an early NASCAR announcer. This required much travel and time away from home, which stressed their family and led to the end of the marriage in 1963.

Margaret and the children then moved to Tallahassee, FL. She had enjoyed talking to her pastor and kept up a correspondence by mail. Carlton was a widower, having lost his wife in 1963, and had been relocated to Reidsville, near Statesboro, that same year. Their written relationship grew into much more, and the two were married at Tallahassee's Southside Methodist Church in 1964.

Together, they would serve several South Georgia churches: Adrian, Richland, Arco in Brunswick, Morningside in Thomasville, Meldrim, Arlington, Tyson in Moultrie, Morven, Surrency/Bethel, and Jeffersonville. Margaret was very active in their churches, visiting with Carlton, supporting the UMW, and singing second soprano in the choir—even singing duets with Betty Jean. She also enjoyed Bible studies, gardening, and sewing.

Suffering from heart problems, Carlton took Medical Leave from 1984-1987 and retired to the then-vacant parsonage on the Meigs/Ochlocknee Charge. However, Carlton had successful heart surgery in 1985 and returned to preaching for nine more years. He would permanently retire in 1994 and pass away in 1997.

Margaret would then move to Apopka, FL, to be near her daughter, Betty Jean (nicknamed “Ringo”). Her active life would continue for as long as her health allowed—remaining in church and community, she especially enjoyed visiting the local yard sales. Eventually, Margaret moved in with her daughter. The last fifteen years of her life were fraught with medical challenges, with Betty Jean sleeping on the couch to stay within sight of her mother's home hospital bed. Margaret's little Chihuahua, Precious, was her constant companion and refused to leave her side.

No illness could diminish Margaret's sweetness and love. Her life was marked by a genuine desire to help others and would give without hesitation, guided by her favorite verse: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matthew 7:1-2, KJV) Betty Jean would say that her mother “had the biggest heart there ever was.”

But the fragility of the human frame is unescapable. At the age of 94, on March 23, 2016, Margaret entered into her Reward Eternal. Her last breaths were drawn at Florida Hospital in Apopka. Her body found rest next to Carlton in the City Cemetery in Cairo, GA—but her soul found perfect delight in our Lord.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

*Mary Grace Patten
Scoates McCurley*

March 26, 1921- April 13, 2016



Grace Patten Scoates, widow of Rev. H.W. “Speed” Scoates, was born in Brooksville, FL. She and Speed met at an MYF conference, where Speed penned a red star next to her name in the conference program, though Grace at first refused to date him--“Too handsome,” she always told her children. “Handsome men are too vain to be interesting.” They worked together for over fifty years as a loving couple, as parents, and as a ministerial team. Speed called her “Gracious Mary,” and she was.

Grace and Speed were married in Norfolk, VA, in 1941 before Speed’s ship left for war. Their first child, Luellen, was born in a Navy hospital. After the war, Speed entered seminary at Candler School of Theology and was ordained in 1952, the year their second daughter, Dana, was born. Their son, Gaylon, had been born in 1950. Grace’s often-expressed wish to have twenty children was not possible for her, so she and Speed added several foster children to their own three and were unofficial parents to a number of youth throughout the years.

Music was always at the center of Grace’s heart, and she was a valued alto in the choir of every church Speed served. Speed always regretted his inability to sing, having been born tone deaf, so he rejoiced in Grace’s willingness to share her musical abilities. Besides singing in choirs, she sang constantly as she worked around their parsonage homes. She spent part of each day playing the piano, which was one of the few personal items of furniture owned by the itinerant couple. In the final years of her life, when much of her cognition had slipped away, she could be rallied to get up from her bed when her daughter Dana launched into “Rise up, rise up, for Jesus!”

Of all their ministerial appointments, the two perhaps best loved by Grace were their years at Epworth by the Sea and their last years of active ministry, when Speed worked

with the Board of Global Missions and they were afforded the chance to see much of the country together.

In their retirement, they lived on an old farm in Bethlehem, GA. Speed enjoyed restoring the farm buildings, and Grace was finally able to grow flower gardens she knew she would not have to leave behind. When Speed died of cancer in 1992, Grace was right beside him in their farmhouse bedroom, holding the hand she'd held for five decades.

By her own request (or royal decree, as her children deemed it), Grace's ashes were scattered in the creek running through her farm, now known as Grace Farm. Over one hundred people gathered by the creek on a sunny June day to sing her home, and after the scattering, musicians played fiddles and guitars and sang all afternoon--a fitting send-off for "Amazing Grace."

Submitted by Dana Scoates Wildsmith at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Glenda Faye Kelley Webb

July 6, 1946 – May 12, 2016

“The knowledge that you have emerged wiser and stronger from setbacks means that you are, ever after, secure in your ability to survive.”

J. K. Rowling, 2008



Sometimes the challenges of life are faced far, far too young. So it was with Glenda Kelley. Born amid the final echoes of World War II, Glenda entered life with a hole in her heart—a significant threat even today, but even more so in a time of rationing and a near-universal focus on the war effort. Yet she possessed a strong spirit of survival, strength that would carry her through multiple heart operations carrying into her teenage years and through a childhood lived in back and leg braces.

Eventually, Glenda’s body healed, and she began to live free of her former medical encumbrances. Single for many years, she was introduced by church friends to a gentleman and poet named Ronald Kenneth Webb. Love bloomed quickly, and Glenda and Ronald were married on June 17, 1977, at North Highland Assembly of God in Columbus, GA.

The next few years brought two major changes to the new couple’s life. First, Ronald experienced a call to the ministry—which led the Webbs to the United Methodist Church. He would enter the South Georgia Conference in 1985 and be ordained Elder in 1986. In the midst of entering the itinerant ministry, 1984 brought the birth of their daughter, Kimberly.

As the newly enlarged family began the adventure of full-time Christian service, Glenda supported Ronald and helped raise Kimberly with dedication, compassion, and care. A quiet worker, Glenda could often be found relaxing with a book and an ice-cold bottle of her favorite beverage, Dr. Pepper.

After relocating to Lakeland, FL, Glenda found employment as a cafeteria worker within the Polk County School System. The family worshipped at the then-Carpenter’s Home

Church (Assemblies of God). On May 6, 2009, our Lord called Ronald home. Glenda relocated to Pensacola to be closer to her brother, Max. There she worshipped at the Church of Christ at Milestone. She would follow Ronald to Glory seven years and three days after his final journey. Her love of reading—and her husband’s love of education—would live on in Kimberly’s life and continues to shape her hopes and dreams.

Glenda was remembered at a Memorial Service at the Harper-Morris Memorial Chapel of Pensacola, FL. Rev. Ken Burleson, Director of the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies (Church of Christ), led the service. Her ashes were later interred along with her husband in Parkhill Cemetery in Columbus, GA.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Betty Hayes Oliver

August 13, 1930 – June 22, 2016



Betty was born in Emanuel County and lived most of her life in Waynesboro, GA. She was a bookkeeper and secretary and also served the parish as well with her husband, Rev. Tom Oliver. She graduated from Waynesboro High School and remained an active member of Waynesboro First UMC. Betty and Tom were married 66 years. They shared a deep love for each other, for Christ, and the church.

Betty and Tom were blessed with three children, Julie, Debbie, and Ricky. Julie preceded Betty and Tom in death. Betty provided a parsonage home of love and faith. They also rejoiced in their five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Betty and Tom shared a deep, meaningful faith in Christ. They accepted and served every appointment with grace and quickly endeared themselves to the families in the community. Having known joy and loss they could relate to any member and their experiences in life. Many of the condolences sent spoke of “feeling like family.” Tom and Betty were as much like parents to some and brother and sister to many. Their faith was evident in every facet of their life. Betty was a tremendous witness of sweetness and grace. Her death brought sadness to many, but also hope. Death did not come for Betty, Jesus did.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, June 25, at Waynesboro First UMC. Rev. Sam Wilder and Rev. Craig Hutto officiated.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs



Carol Wood Mathis

August 26, 1935 – July 19, 2016



Carol Wood Mathis was born on August 26, 1935, in Tampa, FL, into the home of the Reverend M. J. Wood and Mary Willis McDonald Wood. Nurtured by these godly parents, she and her six siblings became believers early in their lives.

Carol received her high school diploma in Douglas, GA, and she graduated from Asbury College (now Asbury University) in 1956 with a major in Spanish and minor in English. She was an outstanding basketball player and, following her graduation, became the Assistant Dean of Women.

On August 3, 1958, she married the love of her life, Dr. Vance B. Mathis. Carol and Vance faithfully served Christ and His Church for almost 58 years. Carol was active in the life of each of their congregations and made every parsonage a warm home for Vance and their three beloved daughters.

Carol was firmly committed to her Savior from her early childhood and served the Lord with her whole heart. That steady, strong, and wise faith was combined with a quiet depth. Her beautiful smile, her ready laughter, and her wise insight made her opinions and counsel sought-after and valued wherever she was.

As a teacher, Carol was a positive and meaningful influence on the lives of countless students. During her last year of teaching, she was honored as “Teacher of the Year,” and the high school annual was dedicated to her.

Near the top of her many interests was Indian Springs Camp Meeting, which she attended all of her life. It was there where she grew in dedication to scriptural Wesleyan-Holiness theology, which accounts for her spiritual depth and consistent life.

Carol was predictably sweet, intellectually accomplished and quick, and unusually perceptive and an astute business woman. But above all, she was fun to be with and was a welcome addition to any group. A friend of Bishops and denominational leaders, she was constantly “up” on things. If you needed to know what, where, when or who next, check with Carol. To her, living her faith was both serious business and her greatest joy. The writer of Proverbs 31 describes her well.

In retirement, Carol and Vance loved to travel, take cruises, attend gospel sings, and watch the Atlanta Braves.

Carol is survived by her husband, Dr. Vance B. Mathis of Bonaire, GA; daughters, Melody M. Whitaker of Cordele, GA, Merrie M. DeJeet of Bonaire, GA, and Marci M. Sorrell of Warner Robins, GA; grandchildren, Ryan and Kyle Whitaker and Lauren, Lindy and Libby DeJeet; siblings, Marcia Templeton of Dublin, GA, Lawrence Wood of Lexington, KY, Alan Wood of Macon, GA, and Joy Hencley of Byron, GA; and sister-in-law, Freddie Ann Wood.

On Tuesday afternoon, July 19, 2016, Carol went to sleep and woke up in the arms of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Her Service of Life Celebration was held at Bonaire United Methodist Church on July 23, 2016, conducted by Dr. Lawrence Wood, Rev. Jim Rush, and Rev. Scott Hagan, pastor of Bonaire United Methodist Church. Her earthly remains were laid to rest in the Magnolia Park Mausoleum in Warner Robins, GA. The McCullough Funeral Home was entrusted with the arrangements.

Submitted by Rev. Jim Rush at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Betty Ann Little Houston

April 14, 1926 - September 12, 2016



Betty Ann Little Houston was born April 14, 1926, in Orlando, FL, to Betty Barr Little and Robert Little. She attended school and lived in Orlando until she married Bill Dewberry of Stillmore, GA, near Statesboro in 1946. They lived in Fort Pierce, FL, and in Milledgeville, Tifton, and Statesboro, GA.

Betty and Bill were married for thirty years until Bill's death in 1976. They had a daughter, Sharon, and a son, Billy. She was a homemaker and active volunteer in the United Methodist Church where she met and married the Reverend Lawrence Edward Houston, Jr., in 1978.

Reverend Houston served in the South Georgia Conference for forty years, as pastor of the Kite Circuit, Andrew College, Whitfield Church, Pittman Park United Methodist Church, Douglas First United Methodist Church, Cherokee Heights United Methodist Church, the Conference Council on Ministries, the Waycross District, and Thomasville First United Methodist Church. Betty joined him in that ministry nine years before his retirement in 1987. They carried his ministry past retirement, serving the Gospel Oak United Methodist Church of London, England, from 1990 to 1991.

After returning from London, Betty and Lawrence retired to Young Harris, GA, where they served the Shooting Creek Circuit. In 1998 they moved to Macon to be closer to family, then to Magnolia Manor in Americus in 2006 for Lawrence to get long-term rehabilitation.

Lawrence died on August 19, 2007, shortly after they moved to Magnolia Manor in Americus. Betty continued to live at Magnolia Manor in Americus for nine years and died at age 90 on September 12, 2016; it was a Monday.

A friend, Sue, remembered the family in the comments after her death, “Sharon, so sorry to hear of your mother’s passing away. I sure remember a lot of good times at your house. Prayers for you and your family.”

Betty was preceded in death by her husbands, Bill Dewberry and Reverend Lawrence Houston; a son, Billy Dewberry; and a grandson, Joseph William Vijande.

She is survived by three daughters, Sharon Vijande, Becky Peterson and her husband Spencer, and Deborah Houston; grandchildren, Katie Cromwell and her husband Michael, Laura Ruiz and her husband Caleb, Tommy Peterson and his wife Libby, Spencer Peterson and his wife Shea, and Haviland Moore; and four great-grandchildren.

The graveside funeral service and burial was held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, at the Eastside Cemetery with Reverend Dr. Michael Cromwell, her grandson-in-law, officiating.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

*Patricia “Pat”
Drake Aultman*

March 24, 1931 – October 12, 2016



Mrs. Patricia “Pat” Drake Aultman was born March 24, 1931, to the late Arthur L. and Thelma S. Drake. She graduated from Roosevelt High School and was employed by Graybar Electric for eighteen years as a teller, the head bookkeeper, and finally assistant to the District Financial Manager. But she might say the best thing that happened to her at Graybar was meeting Richard Aultman, who also worked there. They married in 1958 and drove into their new life in her 1957 Chevy (the car everybody wanted back then). She continued to work at Graybar while he finished college and seminary. Richard remembers her being the first woman he’d met who he wanted to marry, and for the rest of their lives together, he knew she was a gift from the God who loved them both.

Pat’s life with Richard was a true love story. Their fifty-eight year marriage was filled with love and happiness, so much so that Richard would frequently write poetry to and about her. When she met Richard, she had no idea he would one day be a preacher, or that she would be a preacher’s wife! They had always been church people, but early in their marriage, they had a profound experience of God’s grace in a worship service together and life was never the same. Over the years, their love grew and the “two became one in Christ.”

After his first church at Rockledge/Lothair, they served the South Georgia Conference for 31 years. She also worked, during their ministry in South Georgia, for Epworth by the Sea for five years. She, using her background in finance, invested their money. Like many pastor’s wives, Pat knew just how to use her wit and charm to help her husband thrive and become even more effective as a pastor wherever they served. Pat was a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ with a strong faith in God’s Word. Her legacy of faith, service, and devotion made a great difference wherever they served across the South Georgia Conference. Her memory is treasured by all who knew her.

After they retired, Richard and Pat settled in Byron, GA, where they attended the Byron UMC and joined the Faith Sunday School Class. And due in large part to Pat's financial acumen, they bought a camper/van and traveled extensively across America until Pat was diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

Patricia "Pat" Drake Aultman passed away October 12, 2016. She is survived by her husband, Richard; a son, David, and his wife, Celetta, who live in Vidalia; and a sister, Sylvia Galbaugh, who lives in Atlanta. Funeral services were held at the Byron United Methodist Church on October 16, 2016. Instead of flowers, the family asked that donations be made to the Byron United Methodist Church.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Jeanette Bittner

December 31, 1922 - October 17, 2016



Jeanette was born on December 31, 1922, in Grand Rapids, MI, to the late Adrian and Dena Snell Vander Giessen. She was a retired school teacher and loved to draw and spend time with her grandchildren. Usually when they visited Michigan during Christmas, her teaching and children were her choice subjects. She was a dedicated, devoted teacher and doting mother.

Jeanette played piano and organ at many churches served by Ray. Many churches lacked musicians. They were blessed with Jeanette's willingness and love of playing, especially for Christ. She also loved using her music for ministries outside the local church. Jeanette especially loved playing in nursing homes for the residents. Music for so many residents was a beautiful visit from the church and a means of spiritually moving beyond their walls.

She had a special passion for the people of Haiti, participating in mission work on the island. Haiti is an extremely poor country. Jeanette took the people there into her heart and sought through Christ to bring hope into their lives.

She was a faithful member of the Poulan UMC and ministered with Ray in all of the churches under his care. Her ministry went far beyond just playing the piano or organ. Like most spouses of clergy she aided the church in a myriad of ways.

She was married to her beloved Rev. Ray Bittner for sixty-eight years. Someone once said getting married is easy; staying married is a fine art. Ray and Jeanette were tremendous artists. They rejoiced in their children, Karen, Linda, Calvin, Debbie, and Janice. Jeanette and Ray also were blessed with many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Ray and Jeanette were blessed to witness the birth of five generations of their family.

The service to celebrate Jeanette's life and ministry was held on October 22, 2016, at Poulan United Methodist Church. Burial followed in the Poulan Cemetery. Rev. Richard Holt officiated.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Jessie Francis Mathis

August 28, 1946 - October 20, 2016



Mrs. Jessie Francis Mathis was born August 28, 1946, in West Palm Beach, FL, to the late Norman Warner and Francis Jordan Bell. She grew up with three brothers: Jay Bell of Wrightsville, GA, Burt Bell of Ocala, FL, and Jimmy Bell of Melbourne, FL; and three sisters: Linda Bell and Jeanie Wier of Naples, FL, and Charla Stewart of California. Later she married Pastor Guy Mathis (before he became a pastor!). They gave life to a son, Joshua Nathaniel Mathis, and four daughters, Shayla Hobbs of Rebecca, Kayla Mathis of Vienna, Jessica Dallis Mathis of Rebecca, and Jordan Dakota Mathis of Rebecca.

Her husband, Guy, remembers, “She is the reason I am where I am today. I had given up on the church, and I had not been going to church at all for a long time. She would ask me to go, but I wouldn’t. We did attend one Sunday so our children could go to Vacation Bible School. Then we were invited to the Dublin District Camp Meeting in Adrian. Preacher Jim Jackson talked about a lady named Fran, and since my wife was Fran, she thought he was preaching about her. On the way home that night, she asked me what I thought about going back to church. I answered, ‘Yes, but I am not going back just to have my name on the roll. It is going to mean something.’ She agreed, and we went back to church; later God called me into the ministry, and I answered the call.”

As their children grew up, she, like many of us, lived for her grandchildren, especially the twins with special needs. With a grandson in the band, she became the grandmother for the Turner County High School Band, altering, cleaning, and repairing band uniforms. In return, the entire band showed up for her memorial service... in uniform!

Looking back over his years in the ministry, Guy says, “I don’t think that God could have given me a better pastor’s wife. I remember after I answered the call into the ministry and accepted my first appointment, I didn’t even own a sports coat. I could have bought one; I just didn’t like to wear such things. Then one Saturday she woke me up and made me

get dressed. When I asked why I had to get up and go shopping, she told me no husband of hers was getting into the pulpit looking like I looked. So we went out and bought some sports coats and ties.”

Like many pastor’s wives, she was the quiet strength in her husband’s background. She was quiet and reserved until she really got to know you. Rather than talk about how much she cared, she wanted to show her love through her actions. She was the quiet example of a woman living out her faith, loving her family, and serving her community.

A resident of Rebecca, GA, and a member of the Desoto United Methodist Church, she died at the Tift County Medical Center in Tifton on Thursday, October 20, 2016. A Memorial service was held at Magnolia Manor in Americus. The family asked that any memorial donations be made to The League of the Good Samaritan in Americus.

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Emma Dell Hendley Brooks

July 27, 1936 – November 6, 2016



Mrs. Emma Dell Hendley Brooks, beloved wife of Rev. James Allen Brooks, died at home in Nashville, GA, on November 6, 2016, following a long illness. Her cremains were laid to rest at Westview Cemetery, Nashville, on December 19. Graveside services were conducted by Rev. Brooks, Rev. V. L. Daughtery, Jr., and Dr. Dale Harward. Arrangements were by Bowen-Donaldson Home for Funerals of Tifton.

Emma Brooks was born July 27, 1936, in Berrien County, GA, daughter of June F. and Bessie Belle Sutton Hendley. After graduation from Berrien County High in Nashville in 1954, she enrolled in Valdosta State College, receiving a B.S. in Education in 1958. Later she would complete a Masters in English Education at Albany State College.

Emma Hendley married James Allen Brooks, a student at Candler School of Theology, on June 9, 1958. She was his helpmeet and faithful companion in ministry through 22 moves, including seminary, US Air Force Chaplaincy, and 9 pastorates—Chula; Whigham-Climax; Palmyra Road, Albany; Shurlington, Macon; Epworth, Columbus; Lynmore, Macon; and Northview, Warner Robins. She made her special contribution as a Sunday School teacher for adults and children. Her teaching ability, outgoing personality, and Christian spirit made her a favorite wherever they served!

Her professional teaching career began in 1958 and continued until disability necessitated retirement in June 1994. Committed to high standards in her profession, she was a member of the National Educators Association and the Georgia Association of Educators. An English teacher, she taught art in a Department of Defense School in England while Allen was serving there. Always seeking to improve, she studied with English artist John Miller and with a direct descendent of English Romantic master John Constable.

While at Mountain Home Air Force Base, she and Allen experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit. A new awareness of the love of Christ and the presence of the Lord became the mark of both their lives! Devotion to cleanliness of both home and personal life also marked Emma's character. Her mind never stopped learning! She loved reading, especially English history, and traveling.

She was a faithful and dear mother to their two sons, Zack and Scott, doing everything she could for them while they were young and still ready to help when grown. She was also generous to good causes, regularly supporting some dozen from her retirement account, including the Methodist Home in Macon, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, and Bethany Home.

Upon Allen's retirement in 1995, they made their home in Nashville, where Allen was her faithful caregiver. Their home was furnished with antiques from England she and Allen had acquired while "junking" there. She was a member of Nashville United Methodist Church, attending when able.

Emma Brooks is survived her husband, Allen; sons, Zachary Allen Brooks of Nashville and Scott Richard Brooks (Karen) of Atlanta; grandchildren, Conner Stormer Brooks and Holly Elara Brooks; brother, J. W. Hendley (Shirley) of Nashville; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by a brother, Bud, whose widow, Judy, lives in Calhoun.

Submitted by James Duke, Jr., a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Florine Lois Ward Chappell

August 6, 1931 – December 3, 2016



Born in Chowan County, NC, with her identical twin sister, Marjorine, Florine Lois Ward grew up in Suffolk, VA. Her parents, Irving and Laura Ward, helped plant the seed of the Gospel in young Florine's heart—a seed that would bear much fruit in her adult life.

She met her husband-to-be, a Methodist gentleman and decorated US Marine named Robert P. Chappell, Sr., during an encounter orchestrated by her sister and Robert's brother—who had wed each other a few years earlier. After Robert expressed no interest in Florine, his brother talked him into attending a local beauty pageant. Robert flippantly declared that he'd marry the winner. Unknown to him, Florine's sister had convinced her to enter the pageant (secretly knowing Robert would be there)—and she won!

During their courtship, the young couple attended a revival led by The Gospel Hour's Dr. Oliver B. Greene. There, Florine totally dedicated her life to the Lord. She gave up dancing and even quit her restaurant job because the establishment served alcohol. For Florine, living for Jesus was absolute happiness. Already good-natured, her natural joy was magnified with Christ in her heart. She was so inspired by Greene's preaching that she asked the famous evangelist if he would marry them. Greene agreed, and Robert and Florine were wed on June 17, 1950.

Thus began the couple's adventures together. After his service to our country, God called Robert to service in the ministry. They traveled in their own evangelistic service until, one day, Robert gave a prayer at a meeting as he had no doubt done many times. This time was different. That prayer was heard by a man who was so impressed with how God was speaking through Robert that he invited him to become the pastor of their church.

Along the way, God would bless the couple with daughters Cynthia and Tamara and son Robert, Jr. Another daughter, Catherine, would find the arms of Jesus as a baby and precede her family into Glory.

Robert would serve Methodist churches in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. He became a Full-Time Local Pastor in the South Georgia Conference in 1991 and remained an official part of the South Georgia Conference for the rest of his life.

Florine's experience as a pastor's wife was far from boring. An accomplished pianist and organist, she played in many of her husband's churches. Also a gifted Gospel singer, Florine formed a Virginia female Gospel trio, The Chappell Bells. The Bells performed for years throughout the mid-Atlantic states.

Florine's life was marked by her near-constant expressions of love, affection, and joy. Never a day passed without her reading the Bible and affirming her love for her children. Hugs and "I love yous" were always in abundant supply! The radio and television ministry of Dr. Charles Stanley and classic Southern Gospel music invigorated her faith throughout her later life.

Raised—and remaining—a Southern belle, Florine kept her beautiful smile and pure graciousness no matter the situation. Her daughter, Cynthia, described her as a "true, ultimate Southern lady." One of Florine's rules for life was to "never let other people know if you are having a bad day. Always be a lady, and always smile!" For her, the smiles came easily from a life filled with the presence of our Lord.

After fifty-two years of loving marriage, God called Robert home on October 2, 2002. The couple had already left Georgia for the more-familiar territory of North Carolina; family was close at hand to support and bless her last fourteen years. She also returned to the Baptist faith of her childhood, joining the Lee Park Baptist Church in Monroe, NC.

On December 3, 2016, Florine joined Robert in Heaven. Her final earthly service was held on December 7, 2016, at her graveside at the Rockbridge Memorial Gardens in Lexington, VA. Pastor T. G. Ayers of Community Advent Christian Church in Roanoke, VA, officiated. A shimmering, pearl-white casket was selected to match her uplifting and effervescent personality in life. Her mortal remains were laid to rest next to Robert. Her spirit doubtlessly is still smiling in Eternity.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

*Mabel Estelle Martin
Harris-Webb*

August 28, 1918 – December 10, 2016



Mabel Estelle Martin Harris-Webb, age 98, of Little Rock, AR, died on December 10, 2016, in Little Rock. The daughter of Noel and Maude Rumph Martin, she was born in Warren, AR, on August 28, 1918. She graduated from Warren High School and then attended Hendrix College for four years, graduating in 1940.

On October 2, 1941, she married The Rev. Edward W. Harris, a Methodist minister, and together they served churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Missouri for over fifty years. Among other efforts, the two of them were faithfully involved in witness and work on behalf of social justice and fairness issues. They were married for sixty-five years until his passing.

On September 24, 2005, she married The Rev. James R. Webb, Jr., a retired United Methodist minister of the South Georgia Conference. Mabel and Jim had first met in 1939 in the College Summer Service Group in New York City--but now the groom was 88 years old, while his new, younger bride was only 87. Together for almost five years after the wedding, they resided first in Macon, GA, and then in Little Rock, AR, until his death in late May 2010.

She was a longtime member of the First UMC of Little Rock. Mabel and Jim were also active as part of the Vineville UMC in Macon during their time in that city, where he had served many years earlier as Vineville's senior pastor.

During the latter years of her life, Mabel dealt bravely with the challenges of significant visual impairment. But on Thanksgiving Day, 2016, she suffered a serious fall and injury. She was hospitalized in Little Rock, but later succumbed to complications from pneumonia.

She is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth Martin Harris Livingston, and spouse Dr. Richard Livingston of Little Rock, and by three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She is also survived by two step-children, Larry Hearn Webb of St. Paul, MN, and Mary Sharon Webb of Hudson, MA, and by many other loving family members as well.

A funeral service was held in December 2016 at the First United Methodist Church of Warren, AR, with her interment in the Oakland Cemetery in Warren. A memorial service celebrating her life was also held early the following month at the First United Methodist Church of Little Rock.

Among her many qualities, Mabel passionately shared her deep, abiding faith in Jesus Christ, offering strangers and friends old and new a cheerful voice and a warm greeting. She was indeed an enduring, faithful servant of the Lord and will long be remembered by those who knew and loved her.

Submitted by Larry Hearn Webb at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Ophelia Wheeler Ray

May 6, 1943 - December 22, 2016



Mrs. Ophelia Wheeler Ray was born on May 6, 1943, in Covington, GA, the daughter of the late Nealus Wheeler and Myrtice Blankenship Wheeler. She married Pastor Rodger Randall Ray, Sr., worked as a teller in the banking industry, and, like most of us in the ministry in South Georgia, moved, from Columbus to Lumpkin to Swainsboro to Guyton and finally to retirement in Americus where she was a member of the Salem United Methodist Church.

They had four children, including a daughter, Laurie Ann Tyler, who died at age 49 on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center. Laurie was the human resources director at Magnolia Manor and was the owner and operator of Sew Many Kreations in Americus. She was formerly a district manager for Walmart, where she worked for 27 years. She loved sewing and serving people. She had a sweet spirit and a way of bringing people together. She left behind a husband, Paul L. Tyler, and three sons, Matthew Tyler, Aaron Tyler, and Jamison and Heather Tyler, who all live in Americus. There was one grandson, Christopher Tyler.

There were also three sons: Eddie and Dean Boulware Ray, who live in High Point, NC; Barry and Denise Ray, who live in Sylvester, GA; and Randall 'Randy' and Ashley Ray, who live in Americus, GA.

Ophelia Wheeler Ray died on Thursday, December 22, 2016, at her home on Cedar Ridge Drive in Americus; and there was a private family funeral service. The family requested that, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions might be made to the Mattie Marshall Alzheimer's Center at Magnolia Manor in Americus, GA.

Ophelia's brother, Douglas Wheeler, preceded her in death, but she was survived by her husband, Rev. Rodger Randall Ray, Sr., of Americus; three sons: Randy Ray (Ashley)

of Americus, Eddie Ray (Dean Boulware) of High Point, NC, and Barry Ray (Denise) of Sylvester; a son-in-law, Paul Tyler, of Americus; a brother, Nealus Wheeler (Janet) of Mountain Home, AR; nine grandchildren: Brandon Ray, Townsend Ray, Ashton Ray, Matthew Tyler, Aaron Tyler, Jamie Tyler, Jeremy Ray, Allen Ray, and Brittany Ray; one great-grandson, Elijah Ray; and several nieces and nephews.

Frances, a former member in Swainsboro, expressed the joint impact the ministry of Ophelia and Ray had, when she wrote, “Brother Randall and family, we are so sorry to hear about the passing of your sweet wife and mother. We enjoyed your years of service at Calvary, and you both were missed very much when you moved. Those were some good memories for us. Praying for God to keep his loving arms of peace and comfort around you. We love you...God Bless!”

Submitted by Rev. Charles Whatley, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Golda Faye Penny Hudson

December 21, 1934 - January 5, 2017



Golda Faye Penny Hudson was fondly known as “Penny.” She was born in Fitzgerald, GA. Upon graduating from Fitzgerald High School, she earned a degree from Georgia Southern College.

As well as her service in the local church, she was a lifelong educator. She was passionate and devoted to her calling to educate her students. She gave 40 years of her life to the education of the young. Her impact was felt and known throughout her career. She believed in being direct, in a spirit of kindness and understanding. She is remembered by her children and grandchildren for her unconditional love and delightful sense of humor.

Penny was married to Rev. David Elzie Hudson for 62 years. She and David are survived by their children, Julie, Mark, and Paul. They delighted in having three grandchildren.

Along with her work teaching, she served in the local church during David’s years as pastor. She was always a dedicated member of the United Methodist Church and especially active in the United Methodist Women. Her wit and sharp intelligence were helpful and deeply appreciated. Her education, intelligence, and gift of teaching made her a valued contributor to the mission of the church, and especially the UMW.

The celebration of her life was held at Portal United Methodist Church on Saturday, January 7. Rev. Jimmy Cason officiated, assisted by Rev. Myra Barrett. Members of the United Methodist Women served as honorary pallbearers.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs



Rosalie Voigt Johnson

July 5, 1934 – January 12, 2017

“Service: Never have this word on your
lips, but keep it in your hearts.”
Dr. Albert Schweitzer



It is something to engage in service to others. It is something else to allow service to define one's existence—to become the central aspect of one's very being and purpose. Dr. Rosalie Voigt Johnson made such an allowance. In doing so, God made use of her to bring healing and hope from the expanse of the African savannah to the inner-city alleyways of Atlanta.

Born in Charleston, SC, to Larry and Carolyn Voigt, Rosalie's first experience with service was the example of her parents. Her father was active duty in the United States Navy throughout World War II; and her mother was a leader in the Girl Scouts. These experiences helped prepare Rosalie's fertile soul for the seed of mission.

That seed was planted in Jacksonville, FL. Larry was shipping off to Europe during the war; Carolyn took Rosalie and her sister Peggy to a local Vacation Bible School. It was there that Rosalie heard a presentation from a missionary to China. She instantly answered God's call. Though only twelve years old, Rosalie decided to become a missionary.

As her relationship with God matured, a focus emerged for Rosalie to specifically serve as a medical missionary. She began her pre-med studies at Wesleyan College in Macon, GA. It was there that she met her future husband, South Georgia Conference missionary and pastor Joseph Morgan Johnson. Morgan's parents were professors at Wesleyan. The couple married at Vineville Methodist Church a year after her graduation and before entering her second year of medical school at Emory. Together, they continued their studies with Morgan pursuing his Doctor of Education degree.

Rosalie graduated first, one of three women in a class of over seventy, and began her medical internship—but not before a one-month hiatus needed to welcome the couple's first child, a daughter named Linda. Four other children would come—Mary, Michael,

Tendai, and Chido. Linda alone would be born in the United States; her siblings would be born in Zimbabwe. When Rosalie finished her internship, her calling to the mission field was answered as the Johnsons began their work in Africa. Rosalie served as the lone doctor of several rural village clinics; Morgan preached and taught African students to become teachers themselves.

In 1974, the Johnsons were deported from Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) for siding with African politicians against Rhodesia's version of apartheid. After one of Morgan's political cartoons inflamed the ruling White government, the family was forced to leave. After two years in the United States and six years' service in Zambia, the changing political conditions allowed them to finally return and resume their work in Zimbabwe. Now welcomed by the new government, a decade of medical and educational work awaited them.

Rosalie and Morgan decided to retire from international missions in 1991. They returned to Atlanta, GA, where Rosalie began another decade of service to those suffering from AIDS and HIV. Rosalie retired in 2001, and the couple moved to Washington, DC, to be closer to family. A highlight of retirement was a 2007 return to Atlanta to renew their wedding vows on their fiftieth anniversary.

Following minor surgery in 2012, Rosalie developed dementia during the Johnsons' last four-and-a-half years together. Morgan and Rosalie continued on in love with the assistance of the Hermitage Retirement Community in Alexandria, VA.

On January 12, 2017, Rosalie's mind and soul were renewed as she stood before the Jesus she loved and so ably served. Memorial services were held at the Hermitage Retirement Community on February 8, 2017, led by Chaplain Kathy Howell (of the Louisiana Conference); at Fairlington United Methodist Church of Alexandria, VA, on February 11 under the direction of Rev. Mary Beth Blinn; and at Hyattsville (MD) United Methodist Church on March 18. Following the final service—led by Rev. Dr. Yvonne Wallace-Penn—a portion of Rosalie's ashes were scattered in the church's Memorial Garden. The remainder of her ashes will be scattered in Eugene, OR, and at her former workplace of Old Mutare Mission in Zimbabwe.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Myrna Eidson Roberts

January 11, 1937 - January 15, 2017



Born on January 11, 1937, Atlanta was Myrna Eidson Roberts' hometown. Upon graduating from Grady High School, she earned a degree from LaGrange College. She and her spouse, Rev. Larry Roberts, met at LaGrange College. After graduation they ministered together as the parsonage family for churches throughout the annual conference: Preston, Associate at Trinity in Savannah, St. Andrew in Columbus, Lee Street in Americus, Blakely, Pittman Park in Statesboro, Perry, and Dublin First. Prior to serving in Dublin, Larry served a Director of Development for the United Methodist Home for Children and Youth in Macon. Myrna was an active participant in the activities at the Methodist Home and the ministries of Vineville UMC.

Myrna worked most of her life as a teacher and bookkeeper. One of her jobs deeply touched her heart. Her first job was that of a juvenile court probation officer. She often came home brokenhearted, wishing she could do more for those hurting kids. Following her work as court probation officer, she taught school. However, her greatest love was teaching Sunday School. She taught Sunday School in all of their parishes. When Larry was appointed to the Methodist Children's Home in Macon, she taught at Vineville UMC in Macon. After their retirement to Lake Junaluska, she continued serving, along with Larry, at First UMC of Waynesville in North Carolina.

Myrna loved hosting friends and family in her home. The parsonage was always a home of warmth and welcome. As well as the gift of teaching, she had the gift of hospitality. In the words of her son Ben, "she prepared meals for bishops, dignitaries, and sweaty boys from a day of sports, black and white."

Along with teaching and providing a welcoming home, she loved the simplicity and beauty of a North Carolina snowfall. Her family noted she spent hours watching snowflakes flutter and fall to the ground.

She and Larry have three children, daughters Denise and Julie and son Ben. They also have five grandchildren.

Myrna was among the most conscientious ministerial spouses in the annual conference. Upon leaving an apartment she was determined to leave it spotless. Her son Ben noted they would sit in the car and watch her back out of the front door, still running the vacuum cleaner. She would then yank the cord from the wall and place the cleaner in the trunk.

Her last days were spent entertaining family and guests during a snowstorm. She died before the end of another weekend. Yet, she passed into the Kingdom doing what she loved, with those she loved.

A celebration of her life was held at McMullen Funeral Home in Columbus, GA, with burial following in Parkhill Cemetery. Friend and fellow minister in South Georgia, Rev. Dr. James T. Pennell officiated. Touching many lives in every location served, a memorial service was also held in Waynesville with Rev. Dr. Garland Young and Rev. Dr. James Pennell officiating.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

*Marguerite
Emmalyn Adams*

May 6, 1926 – January 20, 2017



Marguerite Emmalyn Adams was born in Savannah, GA, to Joseph Earl and Jullie Mae Brantley Downing. An accomplished pianist at a young age, Emmalyn was hired just out of high school as the musician for Isle of Hope Methodist Church in the summer of 1944. It turned out to be a true summer of love for Emmalyn as she met the new Associate Pastor, Arthur Ray Adams. Ray was sent to Isle of Hope for his Supervised Ministry class at Candler School of Theology. Emmalyn and Ray were a couple by the end of the summer and kept their romance alive as she left in the fall for the University of Georgia.

Emmalyn would graduate UGA in 1948 with a degree in Music Education. She married Ray that year at Savannah's Wesley Monumental Methodist Church. They would have three children, Robert, Roy, and Howard; Howard, born in 1958, would precede both of his parents in death after only one month of life.

The Adamses would serve across the South Georgia Conference, at Stapleton, Rochelle, Guyton, Meigs-Ochlocknee, Tennille, Ebenezer (Macon), Richland, Hawkinsville, Nashville, Hazlehurst, Eastman, Buena Vista, Marshallville, and finally Bloomingdale. Ray became a well-known Sunday School writer, supplying the Wesleyan Christian Advocate for years. Emmalyn helped in the background, faithfully proofreading Ray's lessons.

Emmalyn was active in her own ministries of the United Methodist Women and church music, often playing piano for Ray's Sunday evening services. She was a constant, loving, and supportive presence in her husband's life.

In 1988, Emmalyn and Ray retired to the church where they met, Isle of Hope United Methodist Church in Savannah. Emmalyn continued to serve the church as a member of the choir and United Methodist Women.

Ray received his heavenly reward in 2009. Emmalyn eventually relocated to Indiana to be closer to Robert and Roy. She ascended to Glory on January 20, 2017, in LaGrange, Indiana. She was interred in Savannah in Forest Lawn Memory Gardens following a graveside service led by Isle of Hope pastor Mike Ricker.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Virginia Ripley Fathauer Smith

September 6, 1937 – February 13, 2017

“As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God...”

Sidney Lanier, *The Marshes of Glynn*



For over thirty-five years, the marshes of Glynn were a sight of home for Virginia Ripley Fathauer Smith. But her story would begin far from Lanier’s beloved waterways. She was born to Clarence and Aimee Ripley in Detroit, MI, on September 6, 1937. Her family moved to Ohio, where she would grow up, get married, and start a family of her own.

Upon the ending of her marriage, Virginia moved to Brunswick, GA. in 1980 to be close to her now-retired parents. Coastal life suited her well, and Virginia soon became established in the small communities of Brunswick and St. Simons Island. She found a church home at Brunswick’s First United Methodist Church, where she was a loyal member and soloist for the choir.

Virginia’s vocal talents did not go unnoticed. She was hired by Epworth by the Sea to be the worship soloist for the weekly services at Lovely Lane Chapel, an honor she held for over twenty-five years. It was at Epworth that Virginia met Clarence Ethan (C. E.) Smith, Jr., a second-generation United Methodist pastor who was twice a widower. They were married in 1986. Virginia moved her membership to College Place United Methodist Church, where they attended as a couple. Her beautiful voice soon graced the College Place Choir.

Virginia’s involvement with Golden Isles life did not stop at the church doors. She served as the personal assistant to the late Helen Whittle Katz and became the Executive Director of the Katz-Helen and Ray Whittle, Jr. Foundation. The Foundation recognizes outstanding students, teachers, staff, and schools in Glynn and McIntosh counties.

On February 13, 2017, a sudden illness ended Virginia’s earthly work. Surviving are her brother, Art Ripley; sisters, Nancy Murdock and Phyllis Fried; and children, Kenny

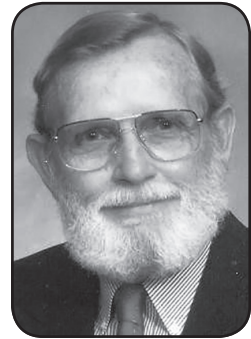
Fathauer, Judy Haynes, Adam Fathauer, Aimee Combs, Heather Pitts, Glenn Smith, Clarence E. Smith, III, Sharon Mays, and Emory Smith. Her family tree continues to grow with eighteen grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

The Celebration of Virginia's Life was held February 25, 2017, at College Place United Methodist Church with Pastor Rob Grotheer officiating. Her mortal remains were cremated, and her ashes will be interred at a future date. Her soul, however, rests in a new home built on the greatness of God.

Submitted by Rev. Chris Shoemaker, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Beauford Morris Johnson

March 7, 1924 – February 21, 2017



Beauford Morris Johnson, 92, died February 21, 2017, at Brookdale Charlotte East in Charlotte, NC, after a brief illness. Mr. Johnson was a native of Waycross, GA, born on March 7, 1924, to the late W. Ellis Johnson and Fanny Lou Johnson. He and Annie Louise Clark were married on August 29, 1947.

He retired from the Waycross Journal Herald newspaper in 1989 after over 50 years of employment, broken only by his service to his country from 1942 to 1946 when he was enlisted in the Navy during WWII. He began his work at the paper in 1939 by delivering papers and ended his employment as the business manager. He worked for a number of years in the advertising department; his advertisements often won awards for creativity.

Morris was active in the United Methodist Church in Waycross. He was a member at both Trinity, where he grew up, and First. He also served at the District and Conference levels. Whether serving as the Sunday School Superintendent and publishing the Sunday School newsletter under the pseudonym “Piney Woods Pete,” teaching teenagers in Sunday School, being on the local church Finance committee and the conference Stewardship committee, or preaching to small congregations as a licensed lay speaker, he was dedicated to helping when called upon.

He was a member of the Waycross Jaycees, the Salvation Army Board, the local Gideon Camp, and the Okefenokee Lions Club, where he was the recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellowship award. It is the highest form of recognition given through the Lions Club International. Locally he was the winner of the Morris Jacobson Community Service award in 2002. He was known for his fundraising ability for many local causes.

When his wife, the Rev. Annie Louise Johnson, entered the ministry as a second-career person, he set aside time to be a support to her. Though women in ministry were a rarity

of that time, Morris would stand with the spouses of the clergy even when he was the only male present. His humor and grace made what at times could have been difficult an easy acceptance of his supportive role. With Annie, his life was full of youth events, mission trips, fund raising projects, events at Epworth by the Sea, and chauffeuring her to various ministerial activities.

Mr. Johnson was predeceased by his wife of 69 years, Rev. Annie Louise Johnson, and his five siblings and their spouses. Survivors include his four children: Lem (Del) of Milledgeville, GA, David (Susan) of Charlotte, NC, Mark (Amy) of Kissimmee, FL, and Alan (Trish) of Mooresville, NC; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and 16 nieces and nephews.

On March 4, 2017, Rev. Barry Giddens, Rev. Bill Dupree, Rev. Jeremiah Johnson, a grandson, and Rev. Bill Ebener, a nephew, officiated the service at First UMC Waycross. He is interred in the Oakland Cemetery in Waycross. Music Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Submitted by Rev. David C. Johnson at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Mary Catharyn Osborn

October 16, 1942 - February 26, 2017



Mary Osborn was born and raised in Pleasant Plains in New Berlin, IL. She graduated from Pleasant Plains High School in June 1960. Mary grew up on a farm and was very involved with rearing sheep in Jr. High as a 4-H project. She was also a musician in the high school band.

After high school she earned a teaching degree in elementary education at Monmouth College in Monmouth, IL, in June 1964. Upon graduation she taught the fourth grade for four years in Fontana, CA. Mary and her future spouse, Rev. Jim Osborn, met in Fontana while both were working in churches with children and youth. They were married on June 29, 1968. Mary and Jim were married for almost 49 years.

One of the great adventures in her life was joining Jim, who worked with the chaplain to the Queen, in London. Mary taught kindergarten at a mission in London as Jim worked with the chaplain and also with the Beef Eaters children and youth in the Tower of London. Following this adventure, they returned to the Iowa Conference, where they served as the parsonage family for nine churches.

Upon moving to South Georgia, they continued their ministry at: Lenox-Antioch, St. Mark in Douglas, and Manor Circuit in the Waycross District. The circuit included New Prospect, Argyle, and Antioch. They then served the Blakely Circuit, which consisted of Westview, Centerville, and Hilton. Their next appointments included Brooks Memorial in Waycross, Wrightsville First UMC, Buckhorn, and the Ocilla-Irwinville charge. After retirement they served Graham-Philadelphia and Lumber City. As well as ministering in their appointments, Mary continued to teach elementary school in Adel and Douglas for 19 years. Mary had a remarkable ability to remember her students through the years when meeting them in public.

In the local church she taught Bible studies and led prayer groups. She and Jim were very active in the Emmaus Walk Community. She battled cancer for years but never allowed it to diminish her servant spirit.

Mary and Jim rejoiced in their children, daughters Sarah and Tracy. They also have five grandchildren. These were the delight of her life.

At age 74 Mary passed away into glory at her residence on Sunday, February 26, 2017. Services were held Wednesday, March 1, 2017, at the First United Methodist Church with Rev. Doug Walker, Rev. John McGowan, and Rev. Kevin Bounds officiating. Burial followed at the Dixie Mausoleum in the Douglas City Cemetery.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Craig Rikard, a member of the Committee on Memoirs

Jane Inman Shirah

August 22, 1926 - March 21, 2017



Jane Inman Shirah died on March 21, 2017. She was the daughter of Benjamin Stinson Inman and Pearl McDonald Inman. Born in Thomasville, GA, she was educated in the Thomasville public schools. She attended the University of Georgia and Florida State University and graduated from Valdosta State University.

For 65 years she was married to Dr. A. Jason Shirah, a minister in the United Methodist Church, serving alongside him in ways that endeared her to congregations wherever they went. She was a member of Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church in Savannah since 1976. She was a leader in her own right, serving as President of United Methodist Women in Wesley Monumental Church for two terms and as President of the Savannah District United Methodist Women for two terms. The Jane Shirah Circle of United Methodist Women in Wesley Monumental Church bears her name, which honors her devoted service. Two circles of United Methodist Women, the Monday afternoon group and the circle named for her, were formed during her Presidency. She was a greeter at the sanctuary door on Sunday mornings at the worship service for many years and knew the congregation as well as her husband, who was pastor.

Mrs. Shirah served as President of the Ardsley Park Garden Club and was active in the affairs of the Savannah Garden Club Council. Her interest and time were devoted to the Chatham County Garden Center on Eisenhower Drive. For a long time she served as Trustee of the White Rose Garden Endowment at the Garden Center. For several years she held membership on the Board of Directors of the Wesley Community Centers of Savannah under the auspices of the United Methodist Church. Having a lifelong interest in history, she served on the South Georgia Conference United Methodist Commission on Archives and History.

Her family enthroned her in its affection; her husband said of her, “She was the finest person I have ever known.” He would write these words in the front of the Bible he gave her for Christmas in 1950: “To Jane, whose life is a constant revelation of Whatsoever things are lovely.” No better words could describe one whose life was lovely her whole life long.

She is survived by four daughters and their husbands: Jane Shirah Stump (Robert) of Fort Valley; Mary Shirah Snyder of Columbus; Anne Shirah of Excel, AL; and Martha Shirah Brumeloe (David) of Cartersville; ten grandchildren: Jason Stump (Jennifer), David Stump (Jennifer), Susanna Stump Zeigler (Sanford), Benjamin Snyder (Michelle), Mary Catherine Snyder Cox (Chris), Laura Snyder, Jane Inman Edenfield (Sharon), Allison Edenfield, Sarah Brumeloe Lewis (Cameron), and Christopher Brumeloe; 7 great-grandchildren: Owen and Wyatt Stump, Jack and Caroline Stump, Benjamin and Annabelle Snyder, and Manning Zeigler; one sister, Eleanor Inman Turrentine, of Atlanta; one sister-in-law, Betty Ann Inman, of St. Simons Island.

The funeral service was conducted at the Page Cemetery in Byromville, GA, Friday, March 24, 2017, at 11:00 a.m. Dr. Ben Martin, Senior Minister, Wesley Monumental, officiated. Mary Shirah Snyder delivered the eulogy on behalf of the family.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. William Oliver at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

*Laren Gail
Eisenberg Reincheld*

April 22, 1946 – March 23, 2017



Laren was born on April 22, 1946, to parents Rev. Larry and Mrs. Helen Eisenberg in Nashville, TN. The family lived in several places in the Nashville area, including the “farm” in Brentwood until 1957 when the family moved to Chilhowee, VA. There, Laren attended high school and played flute in the band, attracting the admiration of her first boyfriend, John Wayne. She earlier wrote to her good friend Joan Storrs that her hobbies included collecting rocks, relics, pictures and maps and almost everything. (This would reach its full flower later in life).

In 1960, the family moved to Rhodesia, Africa, where the parents served as missionaries with the Methodist Church. After three years, Laren returned to the states and stayed with aunts and uncles and attended school.

She later went to Asbury College for two years, then transferred to Oklahoma City University.

While at Asbury she met a dashing young man from Lancaster, OH, named Bill Reincheld. After a courtship which survived the interference of her younger brothers, John and Don, Laren and Bill married in the Upper Room Chapel in Nashville in 1968. She served in various roles from journalist to headstart teacher to pastor’s wife and choir member in Martinsville, OH, South Webster, and the New Hope UMC in Proctorville.

By this time, she had given birth to two strapping boys, Nathan and Stephen, and spent much time and attention mothering and mentoring them.

Then came the call of Africa. Bill and Laren headed off to teach and ultimately lead Kenya Highlands Bible College in Kericho, Kenya for seven years with World Gospel

Mission. In addition to teaching English and creative writing, Laren also helped to host work teams and visited local families. Following many unique experiences in Africa, the family returned to the States to Stone Mountain, GA, where Laren worked at the DeKalb County School for International students at Cross Keys.

Bill then returned to the United Methodist pastorate. The family went from Vidalia to Pooler to Sylvester, retiring at St. Simons Island. Laren continued as pastor's wife and mother to the two boys, who married and gave her four wonderful grandchildren to dote on, Bri, Deb, Jake and Josh.

Early on, Laren had prayed to marry a pastor. It appears she got a lot more than she bargained for!

Laren's heart for people may have challenged Bill's wallet; she was constantly thinking of others and doing things for them, including sending cards for every occasion and gift cards and other gifts for family and many others. For more than a decade, she was the primary caregiver for her mother as well, often assisted by her sister, Pat Brown.

Her love for Jesus shone forth through what she said and did. A prayer warrior, seldom did a phone conversation with family or others end without her praying with the person she was talking to.

Caring, strong-willed, generous, thoughtful, smiling, instant in prayer are but a few of the adjectives which come to mind when we think of this wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend.

Laren Gail, we would salute you, but we hug you instead and bless you for sowing into our hearts your love of your "sweet Jesus." (Her constant term) Sing out strong!

Submitted by Rev. Bill Reinheld at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

Frances Smith Ramsey

June 16, 1927 - March 30, 2017

“A certain woman named Martha received Jesus into her house and she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard his word.” Lk. 10:38-39



Frances Ramsey, “Fram” to her longtime friends, was born June 16, 1927, in Macon, GA, to Charles and Walton Wiggins Smith. During her younger years, she was a member with her family at Cherokee Heights Methodist in Macon. Frances graduated from Miller High School and from Wesleyan College in 1949. It was at Wesleyan that she met and became friends with her “sister in the Lord,” Emmie Johnson, who said, “We met as two who were committed to Jesus and became sisters like Mary and Martha who served Him. We were sisters for 73 years.” Frances and Emmie both continued their studies and received Master’s Degrees in Christian Education from Emory University’s Candler School of Theology, before marrying “Methodist preachers, Gilbert and Thomas, who were like brothers.”

Before her marriage, Frances served as the Director of Christian Education for the First Methodist Church in West Point, GA, and Mulberry Street Methodist Church in Macon, GA. She later taught English literature and served as a librarian for four years in Tifton, GA. She served and worked with all of the congregations to which her husband, Dr. Gilbert L. Ramsey, was appointed: the Leary Circuit, Pooler, Adel First, Pittman Park in Statesboro, Tifton First, Porterfield, and both St. Paul and St. Luke in Columbus. She and Gilbert also served the Savannah and Columbus Districts of the South Georgia Annual Conference.

In her early years, Mrs. Ramsey worked with the youth, serving as youth counselor at Cherokee Heights. Her last years of working were involved with the visitors and new members welcome committee of St. Paul in Columbus. She was instrumental in the growth of the fellowship dinners at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Columbus and a member of St. Paul’s Adelpian Study Club as well as several garden clubs. She volunteered at Callaway Gardens for 13 years, working in the Sibley Horticultural Center

and the Day Butterfly Center. Frances was also an active volunteer with the Meals on Wheels program.

Frances was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Dr. Gilbert L. Ramsey; her sisters, Ella Mae Smith and Ruth Smith Cooper; and her brother, Lewis Y. Smith. She is lovingly remembered by her daughter, Pamela Ramsey Hatch, who is married to Jay; by her son, Gilbert Lee Ramsey, Jr., who is married to Mary Leslie; by two granddaughters, Ashley Frances Aldrich and her husband Ethan and Shelley Ramsey Johnson and her husband Patrick; by her grandson, Luke Ramsey; and by her great-grandson, Hudson Aldrich.

Frances planned her service of death and resurrection down to the last detail, selecting “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” and “Hymn of Promise” as hymns and warning the soloist, Doyle Register, that if he retired, he would have to come back to sing “His Eye is on the Sparrow” at her funeral (he did). She “asked” her grandchildren to read the Scripture: Psalm 8:1-9, read by Shelley; Romans 8:31-35, 37-39, read by Ashley; and John 1:1-14, read by Luke. Dear friend Emmie Johnson shared loving and humorous remembrances at the Sunday afternoon, April 2, service at St. Luke United Methodist Church in Columbus, GA, where she and Gilbert attended after his retirement. The Revs. Robert Beckum, Cindy Cox Garrard, Keith Goodlett, and Dick Reese also participated in the service.

At the interment service at Riverside Cemetery in Macon, GA, on Monday, April 3, the family was surrounded by friends from Macon and from across the conference. Frances Ramsey loved to turn aside to God in prayer, sang of God’s mercy and grace, taught little children of God’s love, was a fit partner to her husband, Gilbert, and toiled with joy and energy alongside him in congregations large and small. She danced at granddaughter Shelley’s wedding less than a month before her death. Emmie’s words provided a moving reminder of friendship lived long in the Lord and a fitting epitaph for a dear soul: “The Lord brought us together in 1944, and He will bring us back together in His everlasting kingdom. Thank you, God, for allowing me to have Fram as my sister and for the closeness we shared. We plan to see each other again at Jesus’ feet.”

Submitted by Rev. Cindy Cox Garrard at the request of the Committee on Memoirs

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